

Gold Mountain golf visionary to leave after 28 years with Bremerton's green gem



Gold Mountain Golf Club director Scott Alexander has announced he will step down from the club after 28 years.
MEEGAN M. REID / KITSAP SUN file photo

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By Chuck Stark

When Scott Alexander was hired by the city as the golf pro at Gold Mountain Golf Club, he said people in Seattle didn't know the golf course existed.

That was 28 years ago.

"It's gone beyond my wildest dreams," Alexander said. "I never dreamed it would become a place people all over the United States knew about. Really, people from all over the world have heard about it and come to play there."

With the state of golf in decline, Alexander recently came to the conclusion that he's taken the Bremerton city-owned facility as far as he can. He told Mayor Patty Lent last week that he will be leaving his position as director of golf at the end of his contract, which expires Dec. 31.

Alexander, 55, is going to concentrate on his growing golf cart business, Alexander Golf Carts.

"It just feels like the time for me to try something new," he said. "Try a new adventure and give it a rip."

Operating a 36-hole complex — trying to keep the courses full during trying

economic times, running the pro shop, Tucker's Restaurant (named after his daughter), driving range and everything involved — has become a risky business. Alexander said he had to factor that risk vs. the reward.

"I have another business that's doing well," he said. "I look at that, man, and you wonder if what I am doing is worth the sleepless nights and everything you have to do. You factor all that in, and you get to a certain age and I think I'd rather get in a growing business and put all my energy into it."

Alexander put everything into getting a new course (Olympic) and clubhouse built; into bringing two highly successful national tournaments to Bremerton — the U.S. Amateur Public Links in 2006 and the U.S. Boys Junior in 2001 — and two NCAA West Regionals. The volunteer assistant coach of the University of Washington men's team — Alexander is currently in Norman, Okla., with the Huskies — talked in the past about partnering with the UW to land an NCAA Championship. As of last week, he said that was still a possibility.

Lent is grateful for his work in transforming the Olympic Course into one of the top-rated and most affordable courses to play in the country.

"Writing that letter (of resignation) was hard for him," Lent said. "Twenty-eight years is a long time. To build something to the extreme that he did for us is amazing, to bring those two big (national) tournaments to Bremerton is just unheard of. He broke his neck to do that ... the city never had anyone work so hard in promotions and his heart was behind everything he did."

Daryl Matheny, the golf pro at Gold Mountain, has worked alongside the customer-oriented and business-savvy Alexander for 24 years, the past 16 as his business partner.

Along with greens superintendent Ed Faulk, who was hired six months before Alexander in 1984, those three have been instrumental in every major project at the facility, which is located off the Old Belfair Highway near Gorst.

Asked what made Alexander tick, Matheny said: "If I had about a week, I'd be able to answer that. He's such a

dynamic person. I'd do anything for that guy. His ability to draw people in and get them excited about what he's trying to accomplish, that's his biggest asset.

"He had a vision about what he thought this facility could be. That vision and being able to get people on board and really fire people up on those ideas is really what makes him what he is."

Matheny played a big role behind the scenes and Alexander and Faulk both put in a plug for their co-worker.

"The city can do anything they want, but I think we have an incredible group in place," Alexander said. "Daryl's leading that group, and hopefully the city will see that and give him a chance. He certainly deserves that. I feel like it's in great, great hands and will only get better."

Faulks said: "(Matheny) has been running the daily operation for years. He's got a lot of years invested there. He'd be my first choice and hopefully that's the way the city goes."

Alexander's cart dealership and fleet of 500 carts — and six trucks and trailers — is operated by Mark Knowles, a longtime

Alexander friend and golf pro. They rent to county fairs and major events throughout the state, and to courses as far away as Medford, Ore. The UW rents carts for graduation, football season and other events.

"Most events need people moved around," Alexander said.

While some think the golf business is on the upswing, Alexander said the "next 10-15 years will be a tough financial deal for any golf course, Gold Mountain included. But in the long run, with all the attention it draws, it's such a jewel for the city.

"When they get that debt paid off, when it gets to that stage, that'll be pretty cool because it'll put money back into the parks capital fund."

The debt is scheduled to be paid off in 16 years, although there could be some challenges, Alexander said. The payment goes up in a couple of years.

"I told the mayor I'd help out in any way I possibly could," he said.

The Alexanders — Scott, wife Ivaly and daughter Tucker — aren't going anywhere.

"That place is incredibly fond to my heart," he said of Gold Mountain.

"Anything I can do to help, I'll do it. My family and I are entrenched in this town."